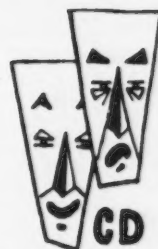


# critical digest



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## This Week in NYC

All the Way Home added the 1960-61 Pulitzer Prize as the "Best drama on an American theme" to the already announced NY Drama Critics Award as "Best American Play" of the season. New drama by Tad Mosel, adapted from James Agee's Pulitzer Prize novel "A Death in the Family" opened Nov 30, 1960 at Belasco to a set of 5 pro and 2 con notices. All daily reviewers praised excellent cast and direction, but dissenters Chapman, News, and Aston, World Telegram & Sun, feared script had limited theatrical interest. Scheduled to close after its first week due to a lack of advance sales and box-office business, a series of national TV and column promotions, plus an advertising campaign hinged on "A Miracle on 44th St" theme kept play open. A cut in royalties and theatre rental, plus twofer tickets kept it running. Immediate result of the two awards has been an increase in box-office business, though the production is still on twofer tickets.

## Plays

The Tenth Man closes May 13 after 624 performances... Kean new musical based on Sartre play starring Alfred Drake to open Nov 2 at Broadway... Fiorello! which has moved to Broadway cut ticket prices to \$5 mid-week and \$7.50 week-end top... Once for the Asking a new comedy by Owen Arno to be produced and directed in the fall by Shepard Traube.

## Broadway Business

Variety reported business very uneven with sell-outs at --- Camelot, Carnival, Mary Mary, Sound of Music, Wildcat, and with four shows on twofers.

## Drama Desk

Robert Brustein, New Republic, awarded Guggenheim grant for study of modern drama.

## NYC Calendar

Becket-Hudson 5/8. David Merrick presents limited three week return of Jean Anouilh play, translated by Lucienne Hill, directed by Peter Glenville. Laurence Olivier as Henry II and Arthur Kennedy in title role. Presented originally Oct 5, 1960 with Olivier in title role and Anthony Quinn.

Curious Evening with Gypsy Rose Lee- Mayfair (235 W 46) 5/9 Gypsy Rose Lee presents her "autobiographical house-party" one woman program. Mon-Thur 8 30, Fri 7 and 10, Sat 8 30 and 11 40 PM.

Meet Peter Grant-Folks - biene (175 E Bway) 5/10. Lee Bergman presents new musical comedy based on "Peer Gynt" with book and lyrics by Elliot Arluck, music by Ted Harris with Paula Coonen, Frank Vohs, David Hartman.

Many Loves- Living Theatre (530-6th Av) 5/10. Living Theatre returns drama by William Carlos Williams to repertory.

## Players

John Gielgud returned from England to direct Frank Overton, who replaced Jason Robards, Jr., Big Fish, Little Fish. Martin Gabel raised to star billing in play... Guy Spaul replaced Robin Cravin, My Fair Lady, who portrayed role of "Zoltan Karpathy" for five years... William Warfield will portray one title role and Leese Foster and Martha Flowers will alternate in other in Porgy and Bess May 17.

## Special Events

May 8-14 proclaimed by NYC Mayor Wagner as "Stage Employees Week" honoring the 75th birthday of Theatrical Stage Employees Union... "King Arthur on Broadway" exhibit at Museum of City of NY, 5th Av & 103, to continue until Oct.

## Off Broadway

Shows that closed include- Happy as Larry after 7 performances, O Oysters after 104, Call Me By My Rightful Name after 112... Hamlet extended at Phoenix to May 28... The Premise forced to play a week at Village Gate due to license problems at its 154 Bleecker St theatre.

## NY Shakespeare

NY Shakespeare Festival will open season Jul 5 with Much Ado About Nothing directed by producer Joe Papp at the Wollman Memorial Skating Rink in Central Park. Second delay in new amphitheatre caused switch.

## Tax Dept

NYC Mayor Wagner met with committee of 15 Broadway producer and union delegates who sought repeal of 5% NYC admission tax. They presented data compiled by Dr. O Glenn Saxon in "The Plight of the Living Theatre" report, commissioned last year by League of NY Theatres. Dr Saxon, Yale Univ, concludes that unless both city and federal admission taxes are repealed the theatre will die as a "free, private, competitive enterprise." Producers stated 5% tax refund would be used to pay higher union wages, and not result in lower prices of tickets.

## Theatre Book Notes

Coward McCann to publish Edward Albee's The Zoo Story and Sandbox in one volume, and American Dream and Death of Bessie Smith in a second.

## Play Diary

Next Week: Porgy & Bess- City Center 5/17... Mandingo-Lyceum 5/17... Donnybrook-46th St-5/18.

## DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

The Tattooed Countess- Barbizon Plaza ( 106 Central Park South ) 5/4, 6 con- Times, Herald Tribune , Mirror, Post, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- and 0 pro- filed on new musical comedy with music , book and lyrics by Coleman Dowell, directed by Robert Adams, presented by Dick Randall - Robert Feldstein with Irene Manning, John Stewart, Carolyn May, Travis Hudson, Coe Norton. Dullness was major charge against book and music with most critics noting that talented cast seemed trapped. Taubman, Times, vetoed heavy-handed musical with tired cliches, dreary stereotype characters, with attractive performers and a few good song ideas that rarely arrive at fruition. Crist, Herald Tribune, noticing that Manning has not been on the NY stage for 15 years, warned actress that haste makes waste, and advised her to have waited a little longer. Only virtues discovered by Herald Tribune arts editor were attractive costumes by Bill Hargate and the half seen talents of May and Hudson. Coleman, Mirror, panned it as pedestrian, sketchy book, music undistinguished, lyrics so-so. Mirror aisle-sitter recommended Hudson for the nightclub circuit. Watts, Post, found only persistent dullness with tedious dialogue and a score rarely bright or tuneful. McClain, Journal American, marked it a small, well-intentioned debacle with uninspiring story, pindling music and a capable cast losing a game fight . Aston, WTS, had kinder words for music which he found had style, grace and beauty, but he feared author's dialogue was dull. Proceedings not helped, Aston added, but either director, choreographer or set designer.

The Yeoman of the Guard- Greenwich Mews (141 W 13) 4/27. 6 pro- Times, Herald Tribune, News, Post, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- and 0 con- filed on first production of repertory season of American Savoyards, presented by Dorothy Raedler-Stella Holt - David Lipsky, directed by Raedler with Raymond Allen, Thomas Vasiloff, Mary Ann Staffa. All approved cast, direction of Gilbert & Sullivan operetta, first of seven Thur to Sun productions. Calta, Times, rated it gratifying with everything in good order by cast with well-trained voices. Minor carp listed by Times man was fact that costumes are on ragged side and that the crowd scenes appeared tumultuous and disordered. Kupferberg, Herald Tribune, thought it took awhile for group to get used to new stage, but then they were back to their accustomed form. Davis, News, applauded slick production by accomplished company in its comfortable basement home. Watts, Post, recommended excellent production by the pleasant and talented company, agreeing production was well-suited to Greenwich Mews theatre. McClain, Journal American, believes the young American company is improving all the time, and also noted new playhouse was ideal for their project. Saffron, WTS, loved warm bath of pleasant Gilbert & Sullivan fare, directed with verve and a sense of tradition.

L'Ecole Des Femmes-Barbizon Plaza ( 106-Central Park South 4/27-4/30, 3 pro- Times, Herald Tribune, World Telegram & Sun- filed on revival of Moliere play in French by Theatre du Vieux-Colombier, which just completed three month college tour of 34 stops. Directed by Robert Marcy, trio of daily reviewers praised accomplished cast, adept and ingenious direction of the modern dress version of 1662 play



### THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

The Happiest Girl in the World original cast album (Columbia) recommended by Watt, News, as equipped with catchy lyrics to bright and melodious excerpts from Offenbach sung by Dran Seitz, Bruce Yarnell, Cyril Ritchard... News music critic also okayed Epic disc of Franz Lehar's 1934 Schoen ist die Welt ( Beautiful Is the World) and Carl Milloecker's 1878 Die Dubarry both presented by a talented unidentified cast.

"Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Harold Arlen Song Book" two disc album of MGM Verve lauded by Simon, Herald Tribune both for singer and author. Fitzgerald makes more sense out of lyrics than she used to, he noted.



### THEATRE TV COMMENTS

All Summer Long final play of the WNTA( NY) Play of the Week season with Henderson Forsythe, Keir Dullea, Philip Fox, and Betty Field praised by Times and News TV reviewers. Shanley, Times, did not think it ranked in quality with earlier productions of season, though he approved Robert Anderson's play and production staged by Jack Kunnery. Gardella, News, cheered fine portrayals by Fox, Forsythe, Dullea. As Channel 13, WNTA, is being considered for sale to an educational TV organization, it is possible that Play of the Week series might be sold to Du Mont TV, and would then be seen in NY next season only one or two nights per week.



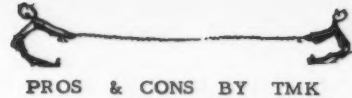
### INTER- VIEW HI- LITES

JOHN GIELGUD, director of Big Fish, Little Fish, does not see anything unusual in returning to NY from London to direct cast replacements in his play, he told Calta, Times. A director ought to come back every few weeks, it sort of builds the confidence of actors, otherwise they sometimes feel neglected. It also forestalls the inclination of performers to "broaden" their interpretations to the detriment of the attraction and audiences.

JOEL SCHENKER, co-producer of A Far Country and president of Webb & Knapp Construction Co, cannot understand why his current production should find an audience when his production of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, The Rivalry did not, he told Hughes, World Telegram & Sun. Producer believes that a play with a message can succeed with the proper theatricality.



GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

**SAVE THE THEATRE...** If tax relief will save Broadway, the City should not hesitate for one minute to grant it, urges Journal American editorial approving repeal of both 5% city and 10% federal admission taxes. \$2 million year loss in revue to the city would be trifling, but the 30c gained at the box-office on a \$6.90 ticket would be a shot-in-the-arm to a faltering show. We must save our theatres if NY is to continue as the entertainment capital of the nation... Mirror editorial states that the healthiest thing the theatre itself could do would be to strive for lower costs to the ticket-buying public.

**PULITZER VIEWS...** Poetic justice seen in the drama prize to *All the Way Home*, a play that nearly failed, comments Times editorial... Pulitzer Prize Committee learned wisdom from the Drama Critics Circle, okays Watts, Post... Prize is tribute to faith of author, director and producer, approves Lyons, Post. Columnist pointed out weakness in selection by award jury that can only see productions that survive.

**COLUMN TIPS...** Frederick Loewe and Lars Schmidt meeting in Paris to set up a Broadway production team, hears Kilgallen, Journal American... *Let it Ride* new musical version of "Three Men on a Horse" raised over \$1 million at a theatre party agent audition, notes McHarry, News... Lillian Hellman has refused all offers for Off Broadway revivals of *Candide*, reports Coleman, Mirror

**POLITICS & PLAYS...** Reason why Democratic NY City Council rejected \$12 million bill okaying construction of Lincoln Center theatre might be due to fears of Robert Moses that City would not grant \$24 million needed by NY World's Fair if they spent \$12 million for theatre, details Barrett, Herald Tribune. Political writer also understands that NYC Mayor Wagner was luke-warm to project that is so much identified with the Rockefeller family.

**HATS & HEADS OFF...** News editorial agrees with violent proposal of Cornelia Otis Skinner stated at Democratic Women's Club luncheon, Washington, D. C. Author-actress pondering her actions if she was elected president for a day, would first abolish the theatre tax on admissions. Then she would pass a law making it a capitol offense to keep a hat on during a performance, offenders to be decapitated, still wearing the hat... Emily Post, Mirror, has a milder solution. She advised that it is perfectly proper to ask a woman to remove her hat, and said woman should not be offended.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...** The theatre lost a gentleman in the death of press agent William Fields, obits Watts, Post... Two act musicals are old-fashioned and forget that audiences today are used to many breaks on TV and at sport events, suggests Davis, News... Recent group of Broadway hits acted as spring therapy for the fabulous invalid, notes Coleman, Mirror... Granting proper credit to directors is difficult unless reviewer attends all rehearsals from the start, points out McClain, Journal American.

**DRAMA MAIL BOX...** Herald Tribune reader urged theatre lovers to write City Council members not to hold up the Lincoln Center theatre bill due to a political dispute over appointment of judges.

*South Pacific* is a stirring, beautifully sung and acted revival put together by experts who make brilliant use of the vast City Center stage. Allyn Ann McLerie's exciting portrayal brings an astonishing amount of freshness to the famed role. She seems to have infused the entire talented company with her enthusiasm. While it is no longer a surprise to hear the lovely hit-studded score, it is a surprise to discover again how well the romantic melodrama continues to hold interest. This inspite of huge sections of pleasant corn. The fact that most of the cast appeared in diverse winter and summer versions must have saved director John Fearnley valuable rehearsal time. The result is a City Center gem, one of the best of the musical comedy series.

The *Tattooed Countess* is a boring, uninspired carbon copy of song ideas, characters and staging borrowed without credit from several recent musicals. The scene is supposed to be Maple Valley, Iowa, but it could not be more than a stone's throw from River City. Dialogue and lyrics are of the non-moving variety, and as there is slight characterization, nothing, but nothing happens in Maple Valley. Two of the leading players are attractive, pleasant actors, but have no voices at all. While the sloppy production featured non-descript sets that somehow never moved as fast as the program listed they should.

NY actors took a beating this week from all sides. Two critics covered the *Talent '61* showcase matinees featuring 200 eager newcomers and neither mentioned a single name in their notices. *Do Re Mi* picture story in "This Week" claims that two live actors and one wooden dummy are used at each table in the night club scenes of the musical hit. Finally NYC Mayor Wagner named the current week "Theatre Employees Week", which includes everyone but actors.

The survival of the NY theatre cannot possibly depend upon an increase to stagehand and other union members, paid for by the \$2 million saved by the repeal of the 5% NYC admission tax. The backstage and box-office craft unions of the theatre are truly the parasites of the theatre living off the creative talents of playwrights and players, plus the interest of the ticket buying public. Their demands should come last, not first if they are honestly interested in the survival of the industry. Theatre technology has made a giant leap forward with the perfection of electronic scene moving equipment; new construction and lighting equipment in use in the nation's college theatres puts most Broadway backstages in the 19th century. Instead of forever agreeing to a continued status quo and/or featherbedding, producers must someday take a stand. Pre-production and running savings then might well be more than enough to grant increased benefits to playwrights and players, plus a cut in prices to the ever loyal theatre fans. Yelling wolf this year about the 5% tax will make it even more difficult to find a legitimate excuse for next year's increase if present conditions continue.





OUTER  
BROADWAY  
THEATRE  
LETTER

College Theatre

The Zoo Story and Krapp's Last Tape twin-bill now at Off Broadway Cricket Theatre to tour college circuit in fall... Break Of Noon by Paul Claudel, translated by Wallace Fowle presented at State Univ of Iowa, Iowa City... Villanova, Penn, College and Valley Forge, NJ, Summer Theatre, to present 10 week summer theatre production course with on-the-job training... Burnett Hopgood, Catawba College, Salisbury, N. C. to take leave of absence in fall to complete doctorate degree at Cornell Univ.

AETA

AETA sponsoring African playwrighting contest for best new translations in English, prizes to be awarded by Univ of Maine Masque Theatre, paid for by Dr & Mrs John Mitchell, Institute for Advanced Studies in Theatre Arts, NYC.

Community Theatre

Tulsa, Okla, Little Theatre named Howard Orms managing director, he had been director of Des Moines Community Playhouse for seven years... The Duel a new play by Steven Rado to debut May 26-27 at Asbury Playhouse, Yonkers, NY

Winter Repertory

Paul Crabtree resigned as producer-director of Royal Poinciana Playhouse, Palm Beach, Fla due to disagreement with owner Frank Hale over policy and principles. Crabtree had been head of the winter theatre since its founding in 1957.

Road Shows

Rhinoceros tour in fall to star Zero Mostel who will later return to NY cast... The Hostage tour closes May 13 in San Francisco. Brendan Behan joined cast onstage opening night.

Summer Playhouses

John Drew Theatre, East Hampton, NY, to present two groups for three weeks each. First will be Shakespeare repertory season presented by Assn of Producing Artists starting Jul 1. Then repertory company composed of Phoenix Theatre cast members, directed by Lawrence Arrick will be presented... Toledo Summer Theatre has decided not to play this season at Zoo Theatre.

Packages being prepared for summer bookings include---Bell, Book and Candle with Ginger Rogers and William Marshall starting Jun 8 at Northfield Playhouse, Detroit... O Mistress Mine with Jane Wyatt and Tom Helmore starting Jul 24 at Skowhegan, Maine... Under the Yum Yum Tree with Darren McGavin starting Jun 26 at Mountainhome, Penn... A Majority of One with Molly Picon starting May 26 at Lambertville, NJ... Marriage Go Round with Myrna Loy and Claude Dauphin starting Jul 3 at Lake Region Playhouse, N. H, and the same comedy with Eve Arden starting Jun 30 at Andover, NJ.

Cinderella musical by Rodgers & Hammerstein to be presented Jun 18 at Musicarnival, Cleveland... Forest Hills Music Festival to be presented Sat eves at West Side Tennis Club stadium to include--Judy Garland Jul 1, 8 and Victor Borge Aug 12, 19.

U.S. Repertory

Theatre Guild American Repertory Company presented five performances at Schiller Theatre, Berlin, with audience and critical approval unanimous for The Glass Menagerie and The Skin of Our Teeth, but with the critics questioning depth of The Miracle Worker.

Living Theatre's fund raising efforts successful with completion of \$43,000 goal. Over \$20,000 raised at art auction - champagne party held at Larry Rivers' studio. Off Broadway company to present repertory of The Connection, Many Loves, and In the Jungle of Cities at eight European drama festivals. They will also present Tonight We Improvise in Italy.

London

Finian's Rainbow with Biff McGuire, Jeannie Carson, Bobby Howes due Jun 8 at Saville after long pre-London tour... Time and Yellow Roses new play by Leslie Storm starring Flora Robson due May 11 at St. Martin's... The Andersonville Trial to be next at Mermaid... Living Theatre's production of The Connection may make second London try this summer, this time at "club" theatre.

Mrs. Dorothy Hammerstein to unveil plaque honoring Oscar Hammerstein 2d May 24 at Southwall Church.

Vancouver Festival

Men Women and Angels Herma Brifault's adaptation of Giraudoux' "Sodom and Gomorrah" to be presented Aug 14 at Vancouver International Arts Festival with Uta Hagen heading American and Canadian cast, directed by Herbert Berghof. Do You Know the Milky Way a new two character play by Karl Wittlinger to be presented Aug 18 with Hal Holbrook, also directed by Berghof.

Europe

The Legend a new comedy by Hjalmar Berman to be presented in English Jul 1-Aug 15 at Alle-teatern, Stockholm, translated by Robert Lindquist... West Side Story production, currently in Paris, seeking \$20,000 State Dept. subsidy to return to Paris May 14-Jun 3 while President Kennedy there.

Tryout Calendar

Call on Kuprin- Forrest-Philadelphia 5/8

Donnybrook! - National-Washington 5/2

"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.



